

SACRED HEART PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday 4th February 2024 in the Parish Lounge

Minutes

<p>1. Welcome, opening prayer and apologies</p> <p>Fr Jackson opened the meeting in prayer at 8.05pm</p> <p>Apologies were received from Teresa Engley, Jude Mariadoss, Siobhan Heffron</p> <p>Present were Ruth Naylor (in the Chair), Rachel Purvis, Christopher Woodward (for the Finance Committee), Sr Dorothy Perrott, Maria Christopher, Annette Campbell-Black, Julian Burling, David Hurst, Primavera Moretti (taking minutes), Fr Matthew Donnelly, Giovanni Peruzzo, Fr Jackson Sebastian, Fr David Gibbons, Max Toone, Rob Hitchcock (Faith Minister). Rachel Marshall and Giles Kennedy, who run the music for the family mass, were also in attendance.</p>	Ruth
<p>2. Minutes of last meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Status on actions which will not be picked up in agenda items● Young adults WhatsApp group - there is now a notice in the foyer with the link to the WhatsApp group on it and a note on the website. No further action required at this time.● Ruth's flyer is now available - 50 copies were left at the back of church and a large poster was put on the noticeboard. Feedback and supply to be monitored.● Notice boards – need to add Rob and Giovanni. Action: Chris to organise for John Stone to do the photos.● Social committee – not much response. Ruth to pick up with Thelma.● Come Home for Christmas – Teresa, Rachel, Primi didn't get the leaflets. David said he would discuss this with Thelma and Fr David to ensure better distribution next year.● Edgeways subscriptions/print copies. The next issue is coming out a week on Friday (12th January). The print costs for 100 is £180, 250 is £365. David asked if there is a budget. Action: David to discuss with Fr David. How do we find out which parishioners really need the print copy? The electronic copy will be emailed with the newsletter but there are also a lot of newsletters printed. We might be able to work out which people got newsletters posted to them during Covid, but the cost of posting would be prohibitive. Some people could deliver them to their neighbours. We agreed that it's very important that we don't forget those people who can't receive it by email.	Chris David H David H

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Small Groups Coordinator from Sevenoaks – Fr David will get them to come in the course of time. ● Tea/Café after family mass – David spoke to Sean last night. Action: David to ensure it will be announced in the Mass notices. There will be a donation box, but Sean will cover any shortfall. It will not happen when there’s a continental breakfast or it overlaps with catechism class. A PPC member should be there every week to meet and greet and be available to answer questions – Action: ALL. People who are new to the parish should be directed to the café – Action: Priests and Welcomers. There is occasionally a welcoming event but they’re not that frequent. They should happen once a term – doesn’t need to be more than tea, coffee and biscuits. Annette is happy to do the catering for them and we can ask for donations (any profits going towards the social fund). We should let the organisers of the parish groups know so they can come and encourage new recruits. Action: Ruth to get in touch with Thelma to diary an event and Ruth can be in touch with parish group leaders to let them know once we have more idea of guest list. <p>The minutes of the last meeting were accepted as a true record and signed by the chair. They will be uploaded to the website shortly.</p>	<p>ALL</p> <p>PRIESTS</p>
<p>3. Discussion on music at Family Mass</p> <p>This was discussed a few months ago by the PPC in reference to some feedback that we’d had regarding the family-friendly nature of the mass. Fr David has already made some changes. Rachel and John have been doing it for 20 years and Giles thinks he started in 1999. During that time, we’ve had the new translation, the transition of the Parish from the Jesuits, Covid and there’s been massive change in the Family Mass over time. There used to be a ‘yellow card’ – a mass sheet for a very child-centric family mass. We get all ages coming and lots of older people like to see the small children engaging in the liturgy, especially the child musicians, servers, readers and children’s choir. Children’s liturgy is roughly every other Sunday. Rachel would like to see as many ministries as possible for the children to be involved in. This is so valuable for older children as it keeps them feeling more involved and coming to church. There’s room for everyone – even for ‘children being children’. Trying to draw in people who are physically far away from the centre of action e.g. inviting children forward for the homily as the SJs used to do. It was lovely when Fr David invited the children up for the baptism on Sunday to sit on the sanctuary steps (often with a good number of parents too). Would be good to see the children physically closer to the altar</p>	

and the priests. When children know who the priests are, they trust them more. Rachel mentioned a previous parish which had a children's mass once a month where the children would gather round the altar. Something that worked really well. Last year was the timing of the first communion classes – there was a class before the 10am and one after, so the natural mass for those families was the 10am and the children could sit in the front pews. Now they get 12-15 in the choir every week (it was 3 or 4 just after Covid). They don't practise beforehand – they just come and join. Then they see the servers and it's reasonable to hope that once they've done their first communion, they'll become servers or readers. For parents taking children to mass it mustn't last too long and we have to speak to the children with age-appropriate sermons or sermons that speak directly to the children. If the children get too restless, the noise builds up and makes it harder to concentrate. Who do we want this service for, who are we trying to bring back into the church, what is the future of the Church? We should be teaching them how to be adults in the church. If we asked them, the children (such as Rachel's own children) would say that having more child servers, and having the priests speaking directly to the children make it more child friendly. Chris suggested that we reserve the first few rows for latecomers and then they'd be full of children! Ruth asked whether the choice to join the choir is led by the children as there's less music in schools now and maybe children are less confident musicians now than a generation or two ago. Rachel said that they tend to come up when they see their friends are there.

Fr David said we've now reintroduced the choir from the school singing once a term for the first time since Covid. There was a discussion about the regularity of the school choir and singing alongside the existing children's choir.

Siobhán (Sacred Heart School) has added as an addendum on the minutes: The Sacred Heart School are delighted to return to singing at the 10am Mass on a termly basis (6x a year). The Sacred Heart are happy to sing alongside the existing / regular choir on these occasions as a collective of young people of the parish. Sacred Heart are also in support of being included in readings and the offertory on these occasions.

When there's Children's Liturgy of the Word in the hall (and it was noted that the priests don't know when this is and could really do with a calendar detailing when the sessions are planned for) they would adapt the sermons accordingly as they're assuming the children are not in the church, but Rachel pointed out that many of the children stay in the church with their parents. If the sermon is addressed to the children, the parent can then discuss it with the children at home afterwards. Fr David says that adults often

complement the priests on the children's sermons as they're more accessible than some of more deep, theological sermons. It would be good to persuade children at the end of their first communion course to become altar servers / sing in choir. The more we can get them to do, the more we keep them interested. Rachel should come to address the parents at the First Communion Course about joining the choir and Annabel (Rachel's daughter) could talk about being an altar server. Chris wonders if there are more child-friendly hymns they can use. They mix traditional hymns with the simple ones appealing to children / the ones they learn at school so that the children learn a wider range of music. The opening hymn is usually a traditional one, the last one usually more modern. Robert commented that the Celebration Hymnal is better for child friendly hymns. Worship songs by Hillsong etc. are done at the 5pm. We noted that there is a good attendance of children at all the masses – the 12 and 5 even the 8pm – the congregational singing is similar in style/standard at all three. Can we look at what songs they're singing at the school? Its geographical position does mean that a lot of school attendees don't come to mass here. Lorraine, the Head, is very keen for it to be seen as The Parish school which is also why they're advertising their school masses so parishioners who live nearby can attend masses at the school. Giles mentioned there used to be a family mass at the school and Rachel said it's missed. Fr David said the numbers weren't great (around 50-60) and he doubted that the Archbishop would approve of reinstating it.

We also discussed what should happen at the Offertory. Fr David explained that the missal instructs that the bread and wine and the contributions for the church and the poor should be brought up to the altar and that the Offertory is part of the liturgical action. The gifts from the people of God – us – are brought to the priest who then transforms the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ which we then receive as a gift in our turn. It could be done much more joyfully than it currently is. It is another job of ministry which some suitable children could do. **Action: Sr Dorothy to ask families to bring up the offertory.** The acolytes should come down and lead them up the aisle.

We discussed what happens in the children's liturgy. They have simplified Gospel Reading and some songs. It's worth the priests and PPC attending so we can know what goes on. There are two age groups – the year 5s and 6s should be in the church for mass. They used to bring up their pictures, but this can disrupt the flow of the mass if they don't come back at the right moment. The people running Children's Liturgy can't see what's going on in the church, so the leaders don't know when to send them back to the church. Chris commented that the reading by the children is superb.

Sr Dorothy

<p>David Hurst pointed out that Sean Jones and his family are planning to restart the café in the lounge each Sunday after family mass. Fr David suggested that in the summer we could get an ice cream van to park outside the church and we would get a cut. The PPC expressed gratitude to all the musicians for what they do. Ruth hopes that Music Director, Bob Rathbone will join us in March. Action: Ruth</p>	<p>Ruth</p>
<p>4. Updates from the clergy</p> <p>We welcomed the new faith minister, Rob Hitchcock.</p> <p>Midnight mass for New Year, which was one of Fr Joe’s initiatives, was only attended by about twenty people so it will be discontinued.</p> <p>Christmas went very well. The Church decorations were beautiful, the Crib was lovely and all the celebrations were very well put together.</p>	
<p>5. Giving and volunteering - follow up</p> <p>Ruth summarised some of the ideas that came up in December’s discussion about encouraging generosity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A giving-focused Homily around Lent (as usual by Julian) - Communicating more about what donations to the parish are used for. - Increasing the prominence and symbolism of the Offertory. - Placing a symbolic offering in the Offertory basket in lieu of physical cash for those donating by standing order. <p>Ruth then presented an audit of opportunities to further communication about donations to the parish. This will be circulated to PPC members after the meetings for comments and feedback. Action: All</p> <p>Some of the things the audit highlighted: The votive offerings boxes don’t currently have any messaging around them. Leaflets at the back of the church are fundraising for other organisations. There should also be information about Sacred Heart, how to give and what the money is used for. We should have messaging in Edgeways. Action: David H to commission an article for Edgeways. When we have the ac/s for 2023 Fr David will look at where the money will be spent and whether we need more money. We should be encouraging generosity as a response to God’s generosity to us. When people know where the money is going, they can be very generous.</p>	<p>ALL</p> <p>David H</p>

<p>We now have a prayer request book. We can't put the prayer requests in the basket, or it might look like Simony (i.e. it might look like people are paying to have their prayers said / granted).</p>	
<p>6. Parish Community initiatives</p> <p><u>Christmas Lunch debrief</u></p> <p>The Christmas Lunch went very well. According to Fr David, there was a 'strange dancing Father Christmas' and at least 60 other people of all ages there. The food was very good. Bill Bottriel did the cooking. And many wonderful and experienced volunteers helped. The Deputy Mayor came. There will be photos and thank yous in Edgeways. Action: David H</p> <p><u>Merton Citizens</u></p> <p>2024 will be an election year. Ellie Stringer is the new Labour candidate, Max Austin, the Conservative and Paul Kohler the LibDem. David is still looking for help with the group.</p> <p><u>Volunteering</u></p> <p>Primi asked if we could liaise with the schools re DofE volunteering opportunities, for example helping with Edgeways, welcoming etc. Sr Dorothy wondered what the volunteers can usefully do in just one term. Primi pointed out that even Bronze DofE candidates could help with welcoming, cleaning or the café and Gold DofE candidates have to volunteer for a year or 18 months and could form a welcome addition to the social committee or SVP. Action: Primi and Ruth to discuss</p>	<p>David H</p> <p>Primi/Ruth</p>
<p>7. AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Feast of Sacred Heart Friday 7th June. Fr David would like us to have a social event. This is a job for the social committee, when we have one. ● Someone asked if there is a replacement date for the Epiphany Party? There will be something later in the year. Ruth to speak to Thelma. ● David Hurst mentioned the Walk and talk group based on the Common where they regularly have 40 people. The new Vicar of Christchurch invited people to walk to the church, have tea and biscuits and enjoy a guided tour of the church. We should do something similar in March. David will host them in the lower hall. 2nd / 9th March. Action: David H ● Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. We're hosting a service at 6.30pm 21st Jan. PPC should try to be present. Action: ALL 	<p>Ruth</p> <p>David H</p> <p>ALL</p>

